



Arizona Department of Education
John Huppenthal, Superintendent of Public Instruction

Arizona Adult Education Distance Learning Guidance

Program Year 2013-2014

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Setting the State Context

Background. According to the U.S. Census (*American Community Survey, 2009-2011*), approximately 825,000 (17%) Arizonans age 16 and older lack a high school diploma and over 220,000 adults cannot communicate effectively in English; however, the State's adult education system only serves approximately 35,000 learners a year. Distance education is looked to as one way to increase the capacity of the system by expanding access to educational opportunities for adult learners using distance learning strategies to eliminate barriers and extend learning beyond traditional classroom settings.

In the spring of 2004, the Arizona Department of Education/Adult Education Services (ADE/AES) joined Project IDEAL and began the implementation of the Arizona Distance Education for Adult Learners (ADEAL) Initiative. In program year 2004/2005, seven pilot projects applied and were funded to provide GED preparation via distance education. Over the course of three years, these pilot projects served over 1,000 adult learners throughout Arizona.

In program year 2007/2008, the decision was made to go statewide with distance education. The statewide implementation of ADEAL utilized a collaborative approach to provide DL services statewide. Nine state-authorized agencies were funded as DL providers to provide distance learning services. Each of these nine agencies was required to form formal collaborative agreements with "non-DL" providers in order to ensure that DL services were available statewide. The non-DL providers agreed to provide referral to a DL provider and face-to-face services for adult learners who request and would benefit from distance learning opportunities, and the DL providers agreed to provide instruction at a distance to the learners referred from non-DL providers. Over the course of the next five years (PY07/08 through PY11/12), over 2,400 adult learners throughout Arizona were served through distance learning.

In program year 2011/2012, ADE/AES implemented the *Transforming Education through Technology (TETT)* initiative as a two-year pilot to study innovative and transformative strategies, including structured *Hybrid Learning* utilizing a one-to-one computer model. While the TETT pilot was done on a small scale in three programs, lessons learned from TETT will inform large scale replication of successful strategies. Beginning in program year 2013/2014, ADE/AES will expand access to the online curriculum, PLATO, and implement Hybrid Learning models in all programs throughout the state. The goals of these initiatives include: 1) increasing the capacity of the system, 2) increasing instructional intensity for learners, and 3) increasing and expediting learner outcomes.

Data about Distance Learning. Data collection and analysis is a critical component of the implementation of ADEAL. During the pilot phase and continuing into the statewide implementation phase student outcome data was invaluable in helping assess the projects and in planning for improvements.

ADEAL Pilot Data: PY04/05 – PY06/07 (3 program years)

- ◆ # of learners accessing DL services: 1,170
- ◆ # of learners with enrolled status (12+ hours): 569
- ◆ # and % of enrolled learners completing an educational level: 228 (40%)
- ◆ # of enrolled learners placed in employment: 37

- ◆ # of enrolled learners retaining employment: 91
- ◆ # of enrolled learners entering post-secondary or other training: 16
- ◆ # of enrolled learners obtaining a GED: 116

ADEAL Statewide Implementation: PY07/08 – PY11/12 (5 program years)

- ◆ # of learners accessing DL services: 2,426
- ◆ # of learners with enrolled status (12+ direct contact hours): 2,016
- ◆ # of learners federally-recognized as DL (DL hours > F2F hours): 1,376
- ◆ # and % of federally-recognized DL learners completing an educational level: 895 (65%)
- ◆ # of federally-recognized DL learners placed in employment: 80
- ◆ # of federally-recognized DL learners retaining employment: 213
- ◆ # of federally-recognized DL learners entering post-secondary or other training: 86
- ◆ # of federally-recognized DL learners obtaining a GED: 198

As implementation of distance learning services expands statewide, data gathering and analysis continue to be critical. In addition to the above data, student outcomes relating to the capacity of the system, intensity of instruction, acceleration of learning, and differences between varying delivery models will be studied closely.

Overview of Distance Learning in the State. Since PY07/08 in Arizona, distance education opportunities for adult learners have been implemented statewide through a collaborative process between state-authorized providers of Distance Learning (DL) and other providers of adult education services.

- ◆ Adult education agencies must apply to become a state-authorized DL provider. As part of the application, providers must agree to formally collaborate with other adult education agencies in the state in order to provide instructional services via distance strategies to learners who request and will likely benefit from distance learning opportunities.
- ◆ The adult education agencies that are not state-authorized as DL providers must agree to formally collaborate with state-authorized DL providers by providing referral and face-to-face services (i.e., intake, orientation, assessment, instructional support) as necessary to appropriate learners who will likely benefit from distance learning opportunities.
- ◆ The State's data collection system will allow any and all ADE-AES adult education providers in which a student is affiliated to have access to applicable student records for the purpose entering data and running reports. *Confidentiality requirements as defined by FERPA shall be maintained.*
- ◆ The State's data collection system will allow any and all ADE-AES adult education providers in which a student is affiliated be held accountable for student outcomes, while ensuring that these outcomes are never double counted at the statewide level.

Beginning in PY13/14, all ADE/AES-funded adult education agencies, including those not previously designated as a state-authorized DL provider, will have the opportunity to implement ***Hybrid Learning*** instructional delivery models utilizing the approved online curriculum to provide instruction at a distance to learners also enrolled in a face-to-face class.

- ◆ Learners who attend traditional face-to-face classes will be given the opportunity to accelerate their learning through participation in distance learning instructional activities in addition to their regular classroom attendance.
- ◆ Agencies implementing a Hybrid Learning delivery model will adhere to all requirements and guidelines pertaining to distance education as outlined in this document and in the *Arizona Distance Education for Adult Learners Handbook*.
- ◆ Learners who request and will likely benefit from distance learning opportunities, and due to barriers cannot or will not attend the face-to-face component of a Hybrid Learning model, should be referred to a state-authorized DL provider utilizing the collaboration process described above.

Contact Information. For more information about Arizona Distance Education for Adult Learners, contact Sheryl Hart at sheryl.hart@azed.gov or (602) 364-2707.

General Distance Learning Requirements

Defining Distance Education. Distance education is a formal learning activity where students and instructors are separated by geography, time, or both for the majority of the instructional period. Distance learning materials are delivered through a variety of media including, but not limited to, print, audio recording, videotape, broadcasts, computer software, web-based programs, and other online technology. Teachers support distance learners through communication via telephone, e-mail, instant messaging, or other technologies and software.

Defining Distance Learners. For federal reporting purposes, a student is classified as a distance learner only if the majority of attendance hours credited to the student are considered distance contact hours as opposed to face-to-face contact hours. Face-to-face contact hours and distance contact hours will be recorded separately. The determination of the student's status as a classroom or distance learner will be made at the end of the year and will be based on which category of hours is over 50% of the student's total attendance time. The student's hours in both face-to-face and distance situations will be included in the NRS report according to the NRS Guidelines for Distance Education Learners.

Defining Hybrid Learning. Hybrid Learning is an instructional delivery model that incorporates distance learning activities with traditional face-to-face classroom instruction. In addition to class time interaction, teachers must monitor progress and support their learners at a distance through communication via telephone, e-mail, instant messaging, or other technologies and software.

A student who participates in Hybrid Learning will be considered a Distance Learner for NRS purposes only if the majority of attendance hours credited to the student are considered distance contact hours as opposed to face-to-face contact hours (see *Defining Distance Learners* above).

Distance Learning Approved Curricula. The following required curriculum shall be used for distance learning instruction: PLATO Learning Environment. MHC GED Integrated Online Solution, MHC PreGED Online, GED Connection, SkillsTutor, and/or USA Learns may also be used to provide instruction at a distance.

In addition to utilizing the required and approved curricula, instructors are encouraged to supplement with appropriate instructional material to support and accelerate learning such as

workbooks, Internet resources, teacher-made worksheets, etc. according to individual student needs. Student time spent on supplemental material may not be counted as attendance.

Measuring Contact Hours. Students in distance education must have at least 12 hours of direct contact with the program before they can be counted for federal reporting purposes. Direct contact hours for distance learners can be a combination of face-to-face contact and contact-at-a-distance through telephone, video, teleconference, or online communication where the learner and program staff can interact and the learner's identity is verifiable.

In addition to direct contact hours, proxy contact hours for learners will also be collected. The manner in which proxy contact hours will be measured will vary depending upon the curriculum used. The chart below shows the Proxy Contact Hour (PCH) criteria and credit (attendance hours) for each of the approved curricula.

Curriculum	Model	Criteria for Awarding PCH	PCH Credit (attendance hours)	Validation by
ALEKS (MHC)	Clock	System must track time on task & log out students after preset period of inactivity	Recorded time in system	Management System
MHC GED Integrated Online	Clock	System must track time on task & log out students after preset period of inactivity	Recorded time in system	Management System
MHC PreGED Online	Clock	System must track time on task & log out students after preset period of inactivity	Recorded time in system	Management System
PLATO (PLE)	Clock	System must track time on task & log out students after preset period of inactivity	Recorded time in system	Management System
SkillsTutor	Clock	System must track time on task & log out students after preset period of inactivity	Recorded time in system	Management System
USA Learns	Mastery	Course 1: 70% proficiency or higher Course 2: 70% proficiency or higher Course 3: 70% proficiency or higher	Course 1: 20 units; 3 hours/unit Course 2: 20 units; 3 hours/unit Course 3: 42 units; 1 hour/unit	California Dept. of Ed (CDE)

NOTE: If a student works in one or more of the above curricula and **does not** receive regular teacher interaction and support at a distance as described in the definitions for **Distance Education** and **Hybrid Learning** above, that time shall be considered "supplementary" rather than "instruction at a distance" and no PCH credit (attendance hours) can be counted.

When additional materials other than those mentioned in the above table are used to supplement the curriculum (i.e., workbooks, teacher-made worksheets, etc.), no PCH credit (attendance hours) can be counted.

Assessing Distance Learners. Distance learners must be assessed under the same guidelines as all adult learners in Arizona using approved standardized assessment tools and after the same amount of instructional time as other students, according to Arizona's approved NRS assessment policy. All standardized assessment must occur in secure, proctored settings. It is permissible to arrange for remote testing locations that are more convenient for distance learners as long as all state assessment requirements are met.

Application and Approval Procedures to Operate a Distance Learning Program

In FY2008 and FY2009, nine ADE/AES agencies applied through a competitive RFGA process and were designated as state-authorized providers of distance education based on the following criteria:

- ◆ Assessment of Need
- ◆ Qualifications of Personnel
- ◆ Eligibility and Competency

- ◆ Coordination, Integration and Non-Duplication of Services
- ◆ Projected Outcomes
- ◆ Program Operations
- ◆ Class Schedule
- ◆ Detailed Budget

State-authorized DL providers are accountable to all requirements described in the FY2009 RFGA, including the requirement to formally collaborate with other adult education agencies to provide instructional services via distance strategies to learners who request and will likely benefit from distance learning opportunities.

In addition to the nine state-authorized DL providers, all ADE/AES-funded adult education agencies may implement the Hybrid Learning instructional delivery model if the following criteria are met:

- ◆ A qualified staff member is designated as the program's Distance Learning Coordinator and that information is made available to ADE/AES
- ◆ Approved online curricula are used to provide instruction at a distance to learners who are also enrolled in face-to-face study
- ◆ Teachers implementing the Hybrid Learning model monitor progress and support learners at a distance
- ◆ Agencies adhere to all requirements and guidelines pertaining to distance education as outlined in this document and in the *Arizona Distance Education for Adult Learners Handbook*
- ◆ Learners likely to benefit from distance learning and due to barriers cannot or will not attend the face-to-face component of a Hybrid Learning model are referred to a state-authorized DL provider

Funding for Distance Learning

Distance learning is an instructional delivery method for providing literacy services, just as classroom instruction and tutoring are instructional delivery methods. Funding from the Arizona Department of Education for distance learning services shall be done through a competitive application process in the same way that other ADE adult education instructional services are funded.

Training Requirements

Personnel affiliated with state-authorized DL providers and Hybrid Learning models are required to adhere to the same training requirements as personnel affiliated with any ADE/AES-funded adult education provider: administrators and instructors must hold valid Arizona Adult Education certification; administrators, instructors and staff must participate in state required training; administrators, instructors and staff who provide distance services and/or utilize the ADE/AES provided online curriculum shall participate in specific training such as PLATO workshops and webinars. Providers are encouraged to use AdultEd Online's Distance Teaching Self Assessment as part of their evaluation process for screening potential new distance learning instructors. Experienced distance teachers are expected to participate in additional ongoing professional development relevant to distance learning.